36 ORGANOLEPTIC EVALUATION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

36.1 Summary

36.1.1 A prelimary organoleptic evaluation of the item enables the examiner to develop an estimate of beverage class, thereby enabling the examiner to determine the technical procedures that will be utilized in the analysis of the item. Organoleptic analyses involves “smelling” the beverage to determine its bouquet and estimate alcohol content. The procedure also incorporates a measurement of total liquid volume of the item.

36.2 Apparatus

36.2.1 Wine glasses

36.2.2 Glass beakers

36.2.3 Graduated cylinders

36.3 Procedure

36.3.1 If a measured volume is requested, transfer contents of item to a graduated cylinder. Record total volume on worksheet.

36.3.2 If not in a wide-mouth container, transfer some of the liquid from the item to a clean wine glass or glass beaker. Assess the following and record on worksheet:

36.3.2.1 Clarity (clear, hazy, cloudy etc)

36.3.2.2 Color (colorless, amber, straw, red etc)

36.3.2.3 Bouquet (vodka, whiskey, beer, fruity etc)

36.3.3 In general, fermented beverages such as beer, wine, wine coolers and other malt beverages have low ethanol content and are run for ethanol analysis only.

36.3.4 Distilled spirits, having higher ethanol concentrations along with other volatile congeners, are examined for ethanol content and volatile congeners (if requested).

36.3.5 Suspected illegally distilled spirits (moonshine) are run for ethanol content, volatile congeners, total acids, and lead content in order to determine whether the spirit was legally or illegally distilled.